



*Town of Chatham*  
*Department of*  
*Community Development*



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**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: December 9, 2010

TO: William G. Hinchey, Town Manager  
*(TW)*

FROM: Terry Whalen, Principal Planner

RE: **Mitchell River Bridge Project Update**

Since the October 2010 determination by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places that the Mitchell River Drawbridge is eligible for listing, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has informed Chatham of their position on the Mitchell River Bridge Project including the following key points:

- MassDOT is fully committed to moving forward with a replacement bridge as part of the Accelerated Bridge Program (ABP).
- The Keeper's determination that the bridge is National Register (NR) eligible does not change MassDOT's commitment to complete this project on time and on budget
- The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), as the lead federal agency for this project, will complete its review of the project under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), MassDOT, other consulting parties as identified by FHWA, and the public.

FHWA previously had identified the following Section 106 consulting parties: the SHPO, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, MassDOT, the Town of Chatham, the Chatham Historical Commission, and The Friends of the Mitchell River Wooden Drawbridge. In the last month, FHWA also has added the following consulting parties to the list: Pease Boat Works and Marine Railway, James L. Cooper, Indiana Historic SPANs Taskforce, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Historic Bridge Foundation, and Preservation Massachusetts.

FHWA and MassDOT expect to meet with the Section 106 consulting parties in January 2011 to review measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects that may be associated with the proposed replacement of the NR-eligible Mitchell River Drawbridge as the next step in the Section 106 process. A Public Information meeting is targeted for late February 2011 in Chatham to outline the results of MassDOT's review of bridge deck alternatives and MassDOT's rationale for a steel/concrete substructure. MassDOT also will take the opportunity at that Public Information meeting to inform all interested parties of the project status and MassDOT's commitment to moving forward.

MassDOT has initiated a full underwater investigation of the wood piles in order to obtain data to evaluate the cost and extent of work that would be necessary to rehabilitate the existing substructure (report expected by the middle of January 2011). This effort will help to inform FHWA's and MassDOT's decisions under the Section 106 process. It also will help MassDOT determine if the proposed project is the most prudent and feasible alternative in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 138 and 49 U.S.C. 303, commonly referred to as "Section 4(f)," in order to recommend the appropriate alternative to FHWA for approval.

MassDOT is still hopeful that FHWA can complete the Section 106 process in a timely manner that will be acceptable not only to the bridge preservation advocates, but also to the Town, the public and the Coast Guard. Getting support from these interested parties will be critical to the schedule and MassDOT's ability to meet the requirements of the ABP. MassDOT's near term goal is to work with FHWA and the Section 106 consulting parties to provide an acceptable replacement structure that is first and foremost safe for all users; can be permitted; will provide the most cost effective use of tax payer dollars; and will satisfy the Section 106 and Section 4(f) requirements.

Attached please find a letter for the Board of Selectmen's approval to reaffirm the Board's desire for consulting party status in the Section 106 process. Additionally, I would like to point out that the Mitchell River Bridge Project page on the Town's website will be updated to include project correspondence through November and December 2010 prior to the Board's meeting on the 14th.

Please let me know if you need any additional information.

cc:     Kevin McDonald, Director of Community Development  
          Jeff Colby, Department of Public Works  
          Paul Lagg, Community Development Department  
          Sam Streibert, Capital Projects Review Committee  
          Bob Oliver, Chair – Chatham Historical Commission  
          Don Aikman, Project Representative – Chatham Historical Commission  
          Norm Pacun, Friends of the Mitchell River Wooden Drawbridge  
          Pease Boat Works and Marine Railway  
          Joseph A. Pavaio, Jr. P.E., Project Manager – MassDOT

December 14, 2010

Mr. Richard Marquis  
Acting Division Administrator  
FHWA - Massachusetts Division  
55 Broadway 10th Fl.  
Cambridge, MA 02142

**RE: Section 106 Consulting Party Status  
Mitchell River Bridge Project**

Dear Mr. Marquis,

On behalf of Chatham's Board of Selectmen (BOS), I would like to reaffirm the Town's role in the Mitchell River Bridge Project and officially request status as a consulting party in the Section 106 process (36 CFR Part 800). The Town is looking forward to working with FHWA, MassDOT and all the consulting parties on this very important project.

For your information, as we have relayed to MassDOT, the representation of the BOS also includes a member of its advisory committee on capital projects – the Capital Projects Review Committee (CPRC). The CPRC has been charged by the BOS to provide a recommendation on the design elements of the Mitchell River Bridge Project.

Very truly yours,

Leonard Sussman, Chair  
Chatham Board of Selectmen

cc: *Damaris Santiago, Environmental Engineer – FHWA Massachusetts Division*  
*Jeffrey Shrimpton Cultural Resources - MassDOT Highway Division*  
*Sam Streibert, Chair - Capital Projects Review Committee*  
*Norm Pacun, Friends of the Mitchell River Wooden Drawbridge*